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QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL AND OTHER DEPENDENT COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES

Written statement submitted by the International Federation of Human Rights, a non-governmental organization in consultative status (category II)

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV).

GE.94-10719 (E)

ONGOING MASSIVE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION IN KOSOVO

1. Despite the reactions of the organizations for human rights and freedoms, several Governments, and the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, the situation of human rights and freedoms of the Albanians in Kosovo has not changed positively in 1993; on the contrary, it has even escalated. The International Federation of Human Rights (IFHR) and its member organization in Kosovo, the Council for the Defence of Human Rights and Freedoms in Prishtina (CDHRF), which is also facing many obstacles in its labours set by the police and military regime, have evidence during the past year of a total of at least 13,435 cases of mistreatment of Albanians by the police and the Army of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Serbia and Montenegro. This is only a small part of the mistreatment that has occurred. During 1993, IFHR and CDHRF have evidence of 15 murders, 14 woundings, over 2,300 arrests and over 120 sentences for peaceful political activities in Kosovo.

2. In an environment of war, death is an ordinary event. Nevertheless, in Kosovo, where there are no major armed conflicts, Albanians are killed by the police and the army without any reason for their national origin and without any previous provocation. For instance, on 25 August 1993, Sefer B. Cukovci, from Cëmillë village, Ferizaj municipality, was killed by the police in the mountains; the police had been searching for his brothers. On 26 August 1993, 250 policemen surrounded the village of Caběr, Zubin Potok municipality, raided 130 houses and beat up 53 villagers. Grisha Kamberi (aged 81), who witnessed the police torturing her children and grandchildren, passed out and after an agonizing two days died, as a consequence of the shock. On 30 August 1993, at around 5.30 p.m., the police arrested Arif M. Krashigi (aged 43) in Prizren. He was transporting sand on his truck. During the night, as he was interrogated by the police, he was so severely beaten and tortured that he died.

3. Similar arbitrary executions and deaths in detention have happened in the past, and none of the perpetrators, members of the police or the army, have been tried.

4. In order to legitimize its repression, the Government uses different excuses. Whilst every Serbian family in Kosovo has been fully armed with weapons and ammunition coming from the police and army storehouses, the police organize punishing actions against Albanians, wrongly accused of possessing weapons. During 1993, IFHR and CDHRF in Prishtina registered 3,400 cases of mistreatment of Albanians under the excuse of the alleged search of weapons. Nevertheless, the number of persons beaten for the same reason by the police, who continue, on an everyday basis, to surround villages, search houses, mistreat the elderly and youngsters, women and children, is much higher.

5. The prisons in Serbia are crowded with Albanians. During the summer of 1993 alone, over 100 Albanians were arbitrarily arrested, accused of having endangered the territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. During this campaign, thousands of Albanians have been tortured, amongst them women and children. The arrested underwent a special torture by medieval methods. Now they are facing trials, and the official accusations are based

on the statements they gave when tortured. Apart from the fact that the investigations were done mainly by the police, they were not allowed any legal assistance during the investigation proceedings. Among the 100 arrested Albanians, 49 of them have already been in prison for two years, after having been judged without respect for the right of a fair trial.

6. All the courts, the prosecution offices and the police in Kosovo are now almost "ethnically cleansed": no Albanian exercises any functions. Tens of thousands of trials, initiated by Albanians, because of the violation of the right to work have not been on the agenda of the courts for over three years.

7. Since they were expelled from their school and university premises in 1991, the Albanian pupils and students in Kosovo have continued their education in cellars and rooms in private houses, without any auxiliary means or classrooms. It is the third school year in which the salaries of the Albanian teachers at all levels (from the primary school to the university) have not been paid. Since then, no school textbook in Albanian has been published, for all the Albanians employed at the School Text-book Publisher have been dismissed.

8. The Serbian police are especially interested in persecuting and mistreating Albanian teachers, pupils and students, who are called "counter-revolutionaries". They have also concentrated their forces against the political activists of different political parties. During the past year alone, 604 political activists were persecuted and mistreated by the police.

9. The freedom of opinion and expression of the Albanian people in Kosovo who make up the majority in this territory, is systematically violated. They continue to live in a complete information blackout for over three years, after the forceful closedown of the radio and television broadcasts on 5 July 1990 and the prohibition of the only Albanian daily newspaper, Rilindja on 7 August 1990. Until 1990, 83 Albanian daily newspapers, magazines and other publications used to be published. Now there are only three of them being published, facing many problems and obstacles. The Serbian parliament has ordered that all assets of the Rilindja publishing enterprise must become property of the Serbian enterprise Panorama

10. The situation in Kosovo which used to be a federal unit of the former Yugoslav federation until 1990, is closer to war than peace. The level of individual and collective human rights and freedoms of Albanians has decreased to an unbearable level. Those rights are drastically and brutally violated. The violence and terror against this population, which makes up over 90 per cent of its total population and almost half of the Albanian people in the Balkans, is a consequence of a deliberate policy applied by the police, army, and the paramilitary units of the actual Serbian regime. Kosovo is today suffering a dramatic situation of apartheid in Europe. Almost all Albanians have been dismissed from the institutions, state administration and economic enterprises. In the past 13 years, Kosovo has been living in conditions of a virtual state of emergency.

11. In a very quiet but effective way, the "ethnic cleansing" of the territory is being done, whilst the serbianization of Kosova is being achieved rapidly with over 32 laws, 470 decrees of a discriminatory nature as well as two programmes aiming at the colonization of Kosovo.

12. The economy of Kosovo undergoes double sanctions - those implemented by Serbia, since autonomy was abolished in 1990, and those of the international community. The poverty, which has a political background, has reached it speak. The present regime, which has usurped the power in Kosovo even obstructs the work of the humanitarian and solidarity organizations.

13. In 1993, the campaign of "ethnic cleansing" increased. Villages of Kosovo inhabited by Albanians in two municipalities dominated by Serbs, Leposaviq and Zubin Potok, were raided by police forces, who not only searched the houses and mistreated the villagers, but even threatened them, saying that if they did not leave their homes soon and "go to Albania", they would suffer the consequences. The local authorities, which have also been usurped by Serbs, have questioned the property deeds of the lands owned by Albanians in Cabër village of Zubin Potok municipality. Therefore, as a result of permanent violence, 15 Albanian families left their homes in Koshtovë village of Leposaviq municipality. The village of Stanciq, after undergoing mistreatment by the Serbian police, has been totally emptied. In towns, Albanians who have been dismissed from their jobs are being evicted from their apartments, which are being taken by Serbs. Aside from the settlement of Serbian refugees from Bosnia and Croatia, the campaign to forcibly change the names of streets and institutions, part of the open serbianization of Kosovo, is being achieved. Now Kosovo has been converted into a large concentration camp for all non-Serbs living in it.

14. In this context, the Serbian police regime and its paramilitary units continue provoking incidents, in order to terrorize Albanians. Such an incident occurred on 24 May 1993 in Gllogovo, when the police tortured 450 Albanians in only three days. Some of the tortured have suffered long-term consequences.

15. IFHR and CDHRF have been informing the Sub-Commission and Commission on the evolution of this situation for six years. We have constantly provided the United Nations with facts as well as legal analyses as evidence of massive and systematic human rights violations and the existence of a system of apartheid. In February 1990, in a statement on the situation in Kosovo, IFHR and CDHRF raised the urgent need for an action by the Commission on Human Rights. Taking into account the worsening of the situation, IFHR and CDHRF believe that the most urgent measure the Commission should take should be the deployment of permanent observers in Kosovo in order to prevent a further extension of the conflict and ongoing massive violations of human rights.